

**Windham Southeast Supervisory Union
Elementary Schools Truancy Policy
December 15, 2003**

Purpose

To assure that the students and their families in WSESU elementary and K-8 schools have support in ensuring attendance at school. The intent is to ensure that students are in school and learning. School attendance is critical to successful school performance. Being present on time is a life skill to be cultivated. The long term goal is to reduce the drop out rate K-12 and the number of juveniles on the SRS caseload.

Process

School District expectations of families regarding tardiness and truancy:

Truancy

It is our shared responsibility to be sure that every child is safe and accounted for on every school day. If your child is absent from school, it is essential that you notify the school prior to 9:30 a.m.

The school will contact the parent/guardian at home or at work, but please note the following: If a child is not in school on a given day and we have not received notification from the parent/guardian, nor are able to verify the child's whereabouts, we are required to report each unverified absence to the appropriate police agency (e.g., the Sheriff's Office for Putney Central School) as early in the day as possible. To ensure the child's safety and to prevent truancy, the police agency will confirm the child's whereabouts.

Tardiness

Students are expected to arrive at school no later than 8:50 a.m. Students arriving after 8:50 a.m. are considered late and will be marked tardy. A pattern of tardiness puts a child at a disadvantage in school. Coming in late, the child regularly misses the opportunity to be greeted by everyone, settle into the day, learn the schedule for the day and generally get off to a positive start. We ask that parents work with the school to ensure that students arrive on time.

Protocol Approach

This truancy protocol utilizes a team approach, if necessary, to explore with the student and family what obstacles are hindering school attendance. An individualized plan will be developed to increase school attendance. Follow-up steps are set to assess if the plan is working for the student and the family. Records are kept in school files of all contacts related to this protocol made with the family of the student.

Team Membership

The protocol initially relies on school staff to insure attendance. If needed at a later stage, staff from state and community agencies, as well as parent liaison supports, will assist.

Tardiness

Tardiness is a disruption to the educational process. It sets a tone that de-values education. It disrupts the child's schedule for the school day.

<i>After <u>five</u> tardy days</i>	Teacher contacts family in person or by phone. Letter to go out to family from principal.
<i>After <u>seven</u> tardy days</i>	Letter to go out to family from principal. Parent meeting scheduled with counselor and teacher.
<i>After <u>ten</u> tardy days</i>	Letter to go out to family from principal. Parent meeting scheduled with principal, counselor and teacher. At the meeting, a waiver is signed by the family to allow discussion between the school and outside agencies if necessary.

Absences – both Excused and Unexcused

<i>After <u>five</u> absent days</i>	Letter to go out to family EST referral
<i>After <u>seven</u> absent days</i>	Letter to go out to family, including if appropriate a request for a doctor's note for any future absences. Parent meeting may be scheduled with EST or school personnel. At the meeting, a waiver is signed by the family to allow discussion between the school and outside agencies if necessary.
<i>After <u>ten</u> absent days</i>	Letter to go out to family. Parent meeting scheduled if appropriate with school and representatives from outside agencies and programs. These could include the WSESU Parent Liaison Program, Youth Services, HCRS, and other community agency supports.
<i>After <u>fifteen</u> absent days</i>	Letter goes out to family. Referral made to SRS.
<i>Dependent on the SRS assessment</i>	Affidavit goes to Windham County State's Attorney
<i>Dependent on the State's Attorney's assessment</i>	The State's Attorney makes the decision whether the case should go to Windham County Family Court or District Court
<i>Dependent on the Court's decision</i>	The District Court has the option to give the family a \$1000 fine or develop another alternative sanction, which could mean the family is court-ordered to be involved with SRS.

Missed Conference Meetings

If a parent misses a conference regarding tardiness or absences, a follow-up letter will be sent:

After 7 days

After 10 days

If a conference regarding absences is missed, SRS may be contacted.